

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 TRSE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

ACDA-05 SCCT-01 IO-11 SIL-01 LAB-04 OC-05 CCO-00

SAM-01 SAJ-01 /090 W

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O R 261315Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6077

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

SECDEF

CNO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USNATO 1360

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, MARR, IC, UK, NATO

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: PROTESTER BLOCKAGE BASE FACILITIES

REF: REYKJAVIK 0260 (DTG 241445Z FEB) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. JUST PRIOR TO PLANNED CONVERSATION WITH PRIMEMIN (REFTEL), WE LEARNED BARRICADES HAD BEEN ERECTED AND ACCESS BLOCKED TO BASE TRANSMITTER SITE AT GRINKAVIK AND RADAR SITE AT ROCKVILLE. UNIONS CLAIMED BARRICADES WERE IN PROTEST AGAINST INCIDENTS WITH BRITISH AT SEA FEB 24 AND WOULD REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

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UNTIL BRITISH FRIGATES WERE REMOVED FROM CLAIMED ICELANDIC

FISHERIES ZONE. MATTER OF LABOR BLOCKADE OF FILLING STATION WAS DISCUSSED ALONG LINES REFTEL AS WELL AS ERECTION OF BARRICADES WITH EMPHASIS ON SERIOUS ADVERSE PRECEDENT SET BY STRIKE ACTIONS ON BASE AREA AND ON DANGER THAT COMBINED EFFECT BARRICADES AND LABOR BLOCKADE WOULD SOON RENDER SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF BASE OPERATIONS IMPOSSIBLE. PRIMEMIN SAID HE BELIEVED LABOR ACTION WAS A "ONE-SHOT AFFAIR" WHICH WOULD SOON BE ENDED, BARRICADES COULD BE HANDLED IN WAY WHICH SHOULD NOT INJURE BASE OPERATIONS AND APPEALED FOR "PATIENCE AND CALMNESS FOR SHORT PERIOD" ON OUR PART END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MID-FTERNOON FEB 25, BARRICADES WERE ERECTED AT BOTH GRINDAVIK TRANSMITTER SITE AND ROCKVILLE RADAR SITE BY SEAMEN'S UNION. LEADERS SAID NO RADIO ACTION WAS IN PROTEST AT RAMMING INCIDENTS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE ON FISHING GROUNDS FEBRUARY 24 AND AT FAILURE OF NATO AND IDF TO TAKE STEPS TO HAVE BRITISH FRIGATES REMOVED FROM CLAIMED FISHERIES AREA. SAID BARRICADES WOULD REMAIN AS LONG AS FRIGATES REMAIN. ALSO SAID BARRICADE WOULD BE ERECTED AT RADAR SITE AT HOFN (H-3) AT NOON TODAY.

3. WHEN CHARGE MET WITH PRIMEMIN HALLGRIMSSON TO DISCUSS PICKETING OF BASE FILLING STATION, PRIMEMIN WAS ALREADY AWARE OF ERECTION OF BARRICADES. CHARGE MADE POINTS OUTLINED REFTEL STRESSING HIGHLY ADVERSE PRECEDENT INVOLVED IN ALLOWING LABOR ACTION OF THAT TYPE ON BASE AREA AND SAID THAT WITH PRIVATE VEHICLES WITHOUT GAS AND OFFICIAL VEHICLES NOT ALLOWED THROUGH BARRICADES, SITUATION WOULD RAPIDLY BE REACHED IN WHICH VITAL SEGMENTS OF BASE OPERATIONS WOULD BECOME IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO MAN THEM. WHILE WE CERTAINLY WISHED TO SEE NO CONFRONTATION AND WOULD TAKE NO STEPS LEADING TO ONE, HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND QUESTION COULD SOON ARISE AS TO WHETHER BASE COMMUNICATIONS AND AIR DEFENSE OF ICELAND WERE ENDANGERED. HOPE WAS EXPRESSED THAT GOI WOULD TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS IT COULD TO END DIFFICULT SITUATION.

4. PRIMEMIN SAID HE HAD BEEN AWARE OF PLANS FOR PICKETING OF GAS STATION AND HE AND FONMIN AGUSTSSON HAD AGREED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THEM AS LESSER OF EVILS. HE SAID THEY HAD BEEN TOLD ALTERNATIVE WOULD HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS TO CLOSE ALL SALES OUTLETS AND OFFICES ON BASE. GAS STATION WAS "OBVIOUS TARGET" SINCE UNIONS SUSPECTED AMERICANS MIGHT MAKE GAS AVAILABLE TO ICELANDERS (HE HASTILY ADDED THERE WAS NO PROOF OF THIS).

5. PRIMEMIN SAID HE BELIEVED LABOR DISPUTE WAS NEARING END

AND HOPED ISSUE OF PICKETING WOULD HAVE RESOLVED ITSELF VERY SHORTLY. THEREFORE, HE MADE "APPEAL FOR PATIENCE AND CALMNESS" ON OUR PART FOR A FEW MORE DAYS. HE BELIEVED PICKETING HAD BEEN "A ONE-SHOT AFFAIR" ALTHOUGH HE WAS AWARE OF STATEMENTS IN COMMUNIST PRESS THAT IN FUTURE LABOR DISPUTES MUST IMMEDIATELY INVOLVE BASE. ON BARRICADES, HE SAID SITUATION WAS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH BECAUSE EMOTIONS WERE "AT FEVER PITCH" AS SHOWN BY "VERY DIFFICULT" QUESTIONING TO WHICH HE HAD JUST BEEN SUBJECTED IN ALTHING. HE ASKED HOW LONG BARRICADES COULD REMAIN WITHOUT MAKING FACILITIES INOPERABLE. CHARGE REPLIED THAT PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION WAS AVAILABLE FOR WORK CREWS, WE COULD PROBABLY GET BY ABOUT A WEEK. PRIMEMIN SAID HE HOPED HAVING ACHIEVED DESIRED PUBLICITY AND SEVERITY OF CURRENT WINTER WEATHER WOULD CAUSE BARRICADES TO BE ABANDONED "IN A FEW DAYS." IN MEANTIME, HE SAID HE BELIEVED IT IN BOTH OUR INTERESTS TO AVOID ANYTHING WHICH WOULD DIRECT CURRENT HIGH EMOTIONS AGAINST BASE.

6. CHARGE SAID HE CERTAINLY HAD NO WISH TO ADD TO PRIMEMIN'S CURRENT WORRIES AND WE AND BASE WOULD TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO AVOID INCIDENTS. HOWEVER, HE WOULD LIKE TO CALL ON PRIMEMIN AGAIN IF WE FEEL POINT IS BEING REACHED WHERE VITAL SEGMENTS OF BASE ARE BECOMING INOPERABLE. PRIMEMIN SAID HE WOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE FOR SUCH DISCUSSION.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PRIMEMIN WAS OBVIOUSLY FEELING KEYED-UP AND HARASSED BY ALTHING DEBATE FROM WHICH HE HAD JUST COME, CONVERSATION WAS MOST EASY AND FRIENDLY. IT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT GOI WILL TAKE NO ACTION TO REMOVE PICKETS FROM BASE GAS STATION OR TO REMOVE BARRICADES FROM OUTLYING INSTALLATIONS. PRIMEMIN OBVIOUSLY HOPES THAT RESOLUTION OF OVERALL LABOR DISPUTE (WHICH HE SAID HE EXPECTS IN NEXT TWO OR THREE

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DAYS) WILL END BOTH SITUATIONS BY GETTING PEOPLE BACK TO WORK. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, WE SEE LITTLE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH BY PRESSING GOI UNTIL AND UNLESS SERIOUS OPERATIONAL DEROGATION RESULTS. IN MEANTIME, SUGGEST DEPARTMENT AND DOD GIVE THOUGHT TO SPECIFIC ACTIONS WE MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED TO TAKE IF SITUATION CONTINUES.

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